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Else Granheim
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IFLA'S ROLE IN AIDING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LIBRARIES

Else Granheim

President of IFLA

Introduction

At first glance it might seem that the topic of this year's IATUL Conference, "Libraries and the Communication Process", should have preceded that of IATUL's last Conference, held in 1979 in Enschede, the Netherlands. At that time the theme was "Cooperation: its Trends, Possibilities, and Conditions". Although I did not attend the Conference I did receive and read the volume of Conference papers edited by Nancy Fjällbrant. I soon realized that, like the ancient question, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?", cooperation and communication must also be viewed on a continuum basis; it is not entirely correct to say that one must precede the other.

However, a major distinction must be made between communication/cooperation on the national or regional level and of that on the international level. Of those successful cooperative ventures or networks presented in 1979, the majority of those were between member organizations or institutions united historically, either by purpose or location: the PICA (Project for Integrated Cataloguing Automation) Project in the Netherlands, the SAIDC (System for Automation of Information/Documentation Centres) System in Yugoslavia, cooperation between establishments of higher education in Lausanne, cooperation amongst the science libraries at Oxford, cooperation of Hungarian technological university libraries, cooperation among academic libraries in New Zealand....

These networks were not confronted with the barriers which exist for successful communication on the international level. Here on the international level, one might argue that cooperation must precede communication, for only by agreeing to cooperate for the removal of barriers can we communicate.

It is difficult to delineate clearly these barriers -- they do overlap and solutions to the removal of one barrier may reveal a second barrier. Nevertheless, I feel that the main barriers to communication on the international level are technical, economic/political, and cultural. Although I communicate with several other NGOs -- Unesco, WIPO, ICSU, ISO, FID, ICA -- on a regular basis, I am involved with the work of IFLA daily and will limit my topic to IFLA's role in aiding international library communication.

Technological Barriers

To date perhaps IFLA's most visible achievements for better communication between libraries are on the technological level -- through the standardization activities of its programme of Universal Bibliographic Control.

Different languages arose because of lack of contact among people of distant regions. Modern communication devices, however, have reduced or eliminated the distance factor and contributed to the development of the "many voices, one world" concept. Nevertheless, the many different standards which exist for library communication nationally must be reconciled with those of other nations for a truly worldwide communication system.

That national standards can be adapted for regional networks has been shown by the success of SCANNET and NORDINFO, and that they can be adapted on a global basis falls within the province of IFLA's Universal Bibliographic Control, UBC, programme. I stress here the word "adapted" because the UBC programme considers it essential that a country's standards be permitted in any international scheme. I also wish to reassure you that the word "control" in Universal Bibliographic Control should not suggest a limitation or restriction imposed upon the national material, but should convey the idea of systematic identification for the purpose of locating the material internationally. With this in mind the goal of the UBC programme can be simply stated: to promote the exchange and use of compatible bibliographic records.

The UBC programme has as its focal point a Secretariat located in London which functions as a coordinating and liaison centre with other groups within IFLA and with those outside organizations such as ISO, ISDS, and Unesco, which share with IFLA a community of interests and a common endeavour in the field of bibliographic standardization and related matters.

There have been four major thrusts to the IFLA UBC programme:

- ISBDs
- standardization of forms of headings
- the standardization of machine-readable bibliographic records
- the improvement of national bibliographies

ISBDs

The major tool in bibliographic control is that for assuring a consistent representation of bibliographic descriptions -- the ISBD (International Standard Bibliographic Description) programme of IFLA UBC. A basic pattern for citing all types of materials -- monographs, serials, nonbook materials, cartographic materials, printed music, antiquarian, component parts -- has been developed. The development of the ISBDs was not solely the achievement of IFLA's working groups. Other international agencies, for example, IAML (International Association of Music Libraries), IASA (International Associa-

tion of Sound Archives), ICA (International Cartographers Association) have lent their technical expertise to develop these standardized communication devices. IFLA has agreed that the published texts of these ISBDs will stand for 5 years and will be subject to review possibly to appear in a revised form as required in 1982-1983.

Although the ISBDs are concerned with description, use is also made of the available international identification number schemes, the ISBN and the ISSN. These schemes are perhaps the most elementary and non-controversial forms of standardization. They list a primary information source, a book or journal, by an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) or an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) in which each book or serial published in a cooperating country receives a unique ISBN or ISSN to enable it to be easily and unambiguously identified. These numbering schemes have been drawn up mainly with the requirements of computer cataloguing in mind, but they serve many other purposes in an efficient and economic manner, for example, interlending.

Other international standards, part of the work of ISO TC/46, are available for use in the preparation of bibliographic description, for example two-letter country code, ISO 3166, which has possibilities in a wide range of library activities.

The ISBD does not, however, address itself to the matter of access points, but it does lay the groundwork for possible future agreement about the way in which access points are chosen and their form of representation in a bibliographic file.

Standardization of Forms of Headings

Standardization with regard to choice and forms of headings is more recalcitrant than ISBDs. The increased use of computers in libraries obviates the need for an international approach to the choice of heading, but it makes even more urgent the need to standardize the forms of headings. Hence the current work in progress on the establishment of authority control systems. The principles which will be applicable in mechanized systems will be followed in authority systems maintained manually. It is also important to emphasize the current trend to accept national experience in establishing definitive forms of personal author names. The UBC Office manual, *Names of persons*, is one such tool. Some others are *List of uniform headings for higher legislative and ministerial bodies in European countries*, and *African legislative and ministerial bodies: list of uniform headings for higher legislative and ministerial bodies in African countries*.

In preparation is the *List of legislative and ministerial bodies for Asia and the Pacific*. These publications have all been verified by national authorities.

Standardization of Machine-readable Bibliographic Records

Much work has been done by the UBC Office on the standardization of content and format of machine-readable records

under the UBC programme. However, hopefully soon to be established is an International MARC Office to be located in Frankfurt, FRG, in the Deutsche Bibliothek. The role of the International MARC Office will be to promote the development of an International MARC Network for the sharing of machine-readable bibliographic records, descriptive and authority, as a major component of the UBC programme. The Universal MARC Format, hereafter called UNIMARC, has been developed to facilitate the international exchange of bibliographic data in machine-readable form between national bibliographic agencies. A number of national libraries have already agreed to use UNIMARC as their exchange format. It is anticipated that each national bibliographic agency will be responsible for the translation of bibliographic records from its national format into UNIMARC for transmission to other national agencies, and will receive machine-readable records in the UNIMARC format from other national agencies and translate them into the national format. Before this is done it is essential that UNIMARC be tested. A test of the 2nd edition of *UNIMARC: Universal MARC Format*, published by the UBC Office, was started in 1980 by the national libraries in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, FRG, UK and the US. They have been sent by the Deutsche Bibliothek a list of 50 commonly held titles. They will code the 50 titles according to their national standards and will encode the records in UNIMARC. The encoded records will be returned to the Deutsche Bibliothek for analysis of the results. This project should highlight problems in using UNIMARC under different cataloguing rules.

Improvement of National Bibliographies

With regard to the improvement of national bibliographies, since these activities of the UBC programme take such different forms, perhaps one example can be given here. At the request of a number of Commonwealth countries in Africa, the UBC Office is compiling a directory of retrospective national bibliographies of the Commonwealth under the sponsorship of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The entry for each country has been checked and approved by a representative in that country. This is to be followed by the preparation of guidelines for compiling retrospective national bibliographies.

Standardization activities for better library communication are not limited to the UBC programme. A standard request and dispatch form for interlending has been developed by the IFLA Office for International Lending. An IFLA publication, *Letters for the international exchange of publications: a guide to their composition in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish*, offers all of the standard phrases essential to the writing of exchange letters. It is numerically coded, and if, for example, one wishes to write in Spanish, "we propose that cash payments be made by credit transfer.", one turns to the same number code in the Spanish section, B 1.6.2, for the same phrase. This standardized reference tool certainly makes communication simpler.

Economic/Political Barriers

Standardized communication formats have increased the awareness of the existence of a publication and where it is held, and how to request it and send it. Other barriers, economic or political, can influence its availability and thus undermine these technical achievements. When information is viewed as an economic resource and a national asset, its potential power to solve national problems has prompted many countries to guard it as a natural resource. Thus much valuable commercial data - patent and new product information, market analysis, commodity price and supply projections, industrial resource findings, etc. - are available only to a chosen few. In addition, in a conference to discuss international cooperation, representatives from some countries were reluctant to share scientific and technical information, stating that bilateral, rather than international, exchange arrangements are usually more suitable. The inferior position of developing countries in this regard has serious consequences for their development plans.

These barriers, then, fall within the scope of IFLA's programme of Universal Availability of Publications, monitored by the UAP Office in Boston Spa, UK. Its objective is the widest possible availability of published material (that is, recorded knowledge issued for public use) to intending users, wherever and whenever they need it, as an essential element in economic, social, educational and personal development. To work towards this objective, the programme aims to improve availability at all levels, from the local to the international, and at all stages, from the publication of new material to the retention of last copies. Of course, much has been accomplished by the UAP programme with regard to exchange and interlending internationally. Other research studies in progress will also result in improved availability. A few of these are: a substudy of transmission times of requests and documents in three regions of the world; a study of national acquisition policies and systems; and a study of commercial book supply to libraries. Other studies of relevance to UAP are being conducted by Sections of IFLA. These include: a study on a model law for legal deposit; a study to determine guidelines for the compilation of union catalogues and union lists of serials; and a study of the availability of official publications in libraries. However, with regard to developing countries, availability is not the only problem. One of the concerns voiced by Professor Neelameghan of the Philippines during his speech to the IFLA General Conference in Manila last year was the fact that developing countries have concentrated on access rather than production. He points out that one of the areas NGOs can help to aid developing countries is by the promotion of their publications capabilities.

At a pragmatic level solutions to the political problems of communication depend on finding a balance between the interests of the State and of the rights of access to information. These solutions will necessarily vary according to the political structure, the degree of development and the size

and resources of each nation. Although many countries have internal copyright agreements, the difficulties in legislating copyright for transborder data flow must be resolved.

IFLA has begun a study, An International Study of Copyright of Bibliographic Records in Machine-readable Form. It is recognized that a free flow of information between national bibliographic agencies is a pre-requisite for the realization of Universal Bibliographic Control. One might even state that the unconstrained flow of basic bibliographic records, internationally, is essential to research and scholarship as well as to the advance of civilization, generally. Exceptional restrictions (whether economic, legal, bureaucratic or technical) placed on such records are detrimental.

It is, moreover, essential that bibliographic records can be used by the receiving bibliographic agency without formal, or legal barriers. The first phase of the study is to ascertain from national bibliographic agencies already producing such records information relating to the copyright of their records and the problems they encounter in their exchange. The second phase of the study will be to find out the problems relating to copyright in national bibliographic organizations of the commercial or semi-commercial type producing machine-readable records for distribution and exchange to subscribers within a country and sometimes outside. These phases will be conducted by a questionnaire. Complementary to these two questionnaires will be to find out the background and current developments on the copyright of bibliographic records produced by abstracting and indexing services and other information organizations providing bibliographic data bases.

A second study begun by IFLA with regard to copyright is a Study on Copyright of Materials for the Handicapped. The study will provide an overview of library services for the handicapped, both existing and desirable. International copyright conventions will be surveyed and examined to provide a framework for what is permissible within their present parameters and what is possible and practical as far as changes are concerned. The end result of the study should introduce various possible solutions to copyright problems, with supporting arguments, for consideration within national and international contexts and present a series of resolutions with recommendations for an approach to implementation. Both of these copyright studies are being sponsored by the Council on Library Resources.

Other aspects of the copyright problem may be addressed at the Unesco/IFLA International Congress on UAP, to be held in May 1982. The UAP Congress will involve representatives of national governments, of national and international library organizations, librarians from all over the world, booksellers, publishers.... Among its objectives will be to help commit national governments to create national infrastructures of a UAP system, a national network of channels through which material held in different places can be made available wherever it is needed. The development of national infrastructures is somewhat related to the Model Law for Legal Deposit, drafted by Ms. Jean Lunn and reviewed by the IFLA Sections of National Libraries and Bibliography in Manila in 1980. The first objective of a legal deposit law should be

the accumulation of a national collection to preserve, transmit and develop the national culture. The next major objective of a deposit law should be the compilation and publication of the national bibliography. Moreover, the UAP programme stresses that each national government should accept and declare the general principle that citizens of other countries have the same right to access to the non-confidential publications of the representative country as its own citizens.

Allied to the question of copyright in so far as it seeks to make information internationally available with the minimum of restrictions is Unesco's Florence Agreement, adopted in 1950 on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials. Under this agreement contracting States agree not to apply customs duties or charges on the range of publications and other materials listed, which are produced by other contracting States. The Protocol to the Florence Agreement, among other changes, extends duty-free status to audio, visual and microform materials. IFLA has urged its Members to exert their influence with their governments to adhere to the Florence Agreement and/or its Protocol to the Agreement.

Cultural Barriers

With regard to cultural barriers to communication, perhaps the language barrier presents the greatest obstacle to international communication. For communication between libraries, this can be the exception rather than the rule. IFLA has four official languages - English, French, German and Russian - and if we surveyed our 1004 members in 111 countries, we would find that perhaps working knowledge of over 100 other languages is available. For example, on our five-member Programme Management Committee, which monitors the UBC, UAP and International MARC programmes, we can communicate in 7 languages (but not all at the same time and not all with each other!). Our members are very willing, even anxious, to provide translations of library documents into their own languages. The UBC Office frequently receives requests for permission to translate or adapt its publications. A full list of these translations is given in the *Annotated bibliography of the ISBD*, and this list is updated in *IFLA Journal* and *International Cataloguing*. The ISBD(G) has been published in Portuguese and is underway in German; the ISBD(M) has been published in French and is underway in Arabic, Persian, Sinhala and Tamil, Dutch, Italian and Serbo-Croat. Other recent UBC translations include *Names of persons*, *UNIMARC*, and *Annotated statement of principles* into Japanese. *Names of states* has been published in 6 languages - French, German, English, Spanish and Russian, plus the original.

All efforts are made to respect fully the national practice with regard to standards and norms composed for developing countries. This is essential for preserving a country's national heritage and for that country's contribution to the cultural heritage of mankind. However, the national biblio-

graphic agency should undertake the responsibility for preparing the comprehensive bibliographic records of its national imprint and in so doing should follow international cataloguing principles and adapt international standards. IFLA has participated in workshops with this "adaptive" principle in mind, for example, the Anglo-American Cataloguing Workshop held last year in Singapore.

In 1982 there will be a small meeting in Canada after the IFLA General Conference. This meeting will carry on and complement the 1977 International Congress on National Bibliographies and will deal with various aspects to improve and standardize existing and proposed cataloguing-in-publication programmes. Among the background documents being prepared for this meeting are two outlining the requirements for establishing a CIP programme in developing countries with two contrasting environments (Nigeria and Singapore).

It is recognized that the acceptance and use of standards for libraries will have greater impact if these standards are promoted by local leaders in the library community.

Consequently, IFLA holds, every second year before its General Conference, a Pre-session Seminar, co-sponsored by Unesco, with experts from developing countries to discuss such topics as library education programmes and resource sharing of libraries. Although these topics may seem rather remote from communication barriers, the intensive working environment, with distance eliminated, can promote discussion and find solutions to programme development in common areas.

The interpersonal communication networks developed during these Pre-sessions, and also during IFLA Conferences, are invaluable. We learn with whom to communicate in given regions, who the experts are, and whom to call upon in developing regional communication infrastructures.

In addition, IFLA has participated in a project, the ELIPA project, which will identify Experienced Library and Information Personnel in the developing countries of Asia and Oceania. It is hoped that a project of this type can be undertaken in the African and Latin America & the Caribbean regions.

Communication between libraries should also be related to the various needs of different communities within countries -- rural populations, the handicapped, immigrants -- the culturally deprived. Their needs are often overlooked in developing a global information system. IFLA has several Sections, Working Groups, and Round Tables engaged in various studies on how best to meet these communication needs. In addition, a new Working Group on User Research should offer some solutions.

Conclusion

I started by saying that the elimination of one barrier may reveal a second barrier. Certainly it is easy to see that if, because of standardization, we can communicate more readily and efficiently, political or economic barriers may block that communication. I feel that the solution to the removal of these barriers will be found in the solution to the basic problem as indicated in the MacBride Report:

"that of linking communication facilities and activities to other national objectives, or in other words, that of integrating communication development into overall development plans". Communication policies should be formulated to supplement and interrelate with those in other fields, i.e. education, culture and science. We know that this type of mission-oriented network can transcend national borders. The MacBride Report also stresses that "communication policies should be limited to structural and material issues, and not be used to dictate content of communication or restrict expression of diverse opinions". Certainly, standardization activities, structural issues in the communication field, will aid overall development plans. Here communication techniques are being developed by national groups of experts - truly horizontal communication among equals - for the benefit of all nations, both developed and developing. In all attempts at standardization, great effort is made to adapt a nation's standards to international standards. This will preserve the cultural heritage of a nation and its contribution to the cultural heritage of mankind, a material issue. However, "dictating content" and "restricting expression" are political/economic issues. These can only be solved by cooperation - cooperation for better communication between libraries - by NGOs and IGOs, and associations such as IATUL and IFLA.

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